
From: Carla Truax [cjtfire13@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, August 13, 2004 3:22 PM
To: ADMIN-S&E
Subject: Don't undermine NEPA protections

August 13, 2004

Department of Homeland Security
Environmental Planning, Office of Safety and Environment Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge and Homeland Security staff,

I oppose the Department of Homeland Security's current proposal for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA was put into place so that the public could know what was going on, and the current proposal diminishes that capacity. A free country is based on the principle that the government does not operate in secret.

The current exclusions are too broad. There are many activities that can harm wildlife, including fences and barriers that impede wildlife migration and degrade wilderness values, and ground patrols in border areas that destroy or damage critical habitat for endangered species. We should not allow logging and disposal of hazardous waste.

Information, such as analysis of a gas pipeline's potential for leaks and explosions, is critical to the public's ability to protect itself and should not be withheld. The proposal should be more specific so as to minimize withheld information and maximize transparency.

The proposal goes well beyond what is necessary to protect national security, and risks destroying the very democratic ideals that the Department of Homeland Security was created to protect. I urge you to limit the use of categorical exclusions and the withholding of information as narrowly as possible.

Sincerely,

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